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THE RECLAIMED.

“ He hung his head—each nobler aim,
And hope, and feeling, which had slept
From boyhood’s hour, that instant came
Fresh o’er him, and he wept—he wept
Blest tears of soul-felt penitence.”—*Lalla Rookh*.

’Twas o’er!—the wild and fev’rish dream
Of guilt had lost th’ unhallow’d light
That play’d around it from the gleam
Of pleasure’s false yet brilliant beam,
And all that in that trance seem’d bright
And beautiful, and born of truth,
And things of an eternal youth,
Now sprang before the startled sight,
Rifled of their delusive charms,
In alter’d shapes and wither’d forms,
Flitting before the sickened eye
That shrank from their grim mockery.

The “silver veil” was drawn aside,
That o’er the brow of crime was hung,
And all the lustre that it flung
Upon the dazzled sight, to hide
The hideousness that scowl’d within,
Was quench’d and gone—the spell was broke,
And stifled memory wildly woke
From the long sleep she slept in sin,
And brought the shuddering soul at last
To think upon the gloomy past.

Oh what an agonizing look
He cast upon life’s fearful book,
And saw on every glaring leaf
The hopes, the joys, the smiles gone by,
That scarcely lived for him—so brief
Their being ere they droop’d to die;
And better feelings, wont to spring
In earlier time on brighter wing—
These, too, the venom’d shaft of crime
Struck to the earth before their prime,
And left the young heart which they graced
With loveliness, a sunless waste.

Fierce conscience from her torch of light
Threw a red glare upon the gloom
Of memory’s wilds, and made so bright
Scenes that she shuddered to illumine,
That he could count them one by one,
And see for what he gave up all
The sweets with which this world is rife,
Which shine, each like a summer sun,
Over the wilderness of life:
Aye! all the heart of man can call
His own—love, honour, beauty, fame—
The light of an unsullied name;
Nay, even his very hope of heav’n
Was in these reckless moments given
For a wild dream of troubled joy,
That every nobler tie had riven,
And pleased him—only to destroy.

All, all, arose—and in that hour
 Came o'er his soul with startling power,
 Like spirits risen from the tomb
 To taunt—to goad him with his doom ;
 To tell him he was but a speck—
 A shattered and a hopeless wreck,
 Rolling along life's troubled wave,
 That yawn'd around him as a grave,
 With scarce a gleam from mercy's star
 To guide him thro' the wild waves' war,
 And light him to some sunny isle,
 Where hope might live, look up, and smile.

Oh, 'twas too much!—the anguish'd heart,
 Thus chasten'd 'neath that quiv'ring smart,
 Felt thro' it a redeeming thrill,
 That pain'd, yet bid its pangs be still.
 Meekly he knelt him down, and wept
 The tears that long, too long, had slept
 Within his proud, unmoisten'd eye,
 That never look'd for hope on high ;
 And he hath breath'd a heart-sprung sigh,
 Fresh from a reckless, haughty soul,
 That never yet could brook control.

From out the dust he did not raise
 His fallen head to that bright sky ;
He dare not think that prayer or praise
 From *him* could ever hope to stay
 Justice in its terrific sway.
 No, but with wounded feelings now,
 Low to the earth he bends his brow,
 And faintly murmurs one deep prayer,
 Calling on injured heaven to spare.

“ Lord, let thy mercy and thy love
 Lighten my spirit from above ;
 Let but a spark of grace benign
 Beam o'er this crime-chill'd soul of mine ;
 And, God of glory, let me feel
 Thou dost not spurn me as I kneel,
 But hear'st this fervent, wild appeal
 For mercy !”

Lo, a radiance bright,
 Like that of morning's smile, awaking
 Upon the gloomy pall of night,
 Over the soul's horizon breaking,
 Sheds softly round its lovely light ;
 And he—the lost one—now can claim
 The smiles of virtue, honour, fame !

But not alone he feels a bliss
 So exquisite, so sweet as this,
 But e'en in the ethereal skies
 Angels ring out their melodies—
 Their songs of joy—and loudly share
 The triumph of a heartfelt prayer ;
 For if there be a scene that can
 Give a peculiar joy to heaven,
 'Tis that, when gully, sinful man
 Stands at her throne—reclaim'd—forgiven !

Fitz —, T. C. D.